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AFTER CARE INSTRUCTIONS for
OTOPLASTY (EAR RESHAPING)

MEDICATIONS

- You may be prescribed narcotic pain medication which you should take as needed and directed. While most of these medications are prescribed to be taken 1 to 2 pills every 4 to 6 hours, you may find it better to take 1 pill every 2 to 3 hours if the effects start wearing off too soon. However, do not exceed the prescribed amount per day.
- As your pain decreases, you may switch to over the counter Tylenol (acetaminophen). Keep in mind that you should not take more than 4000 mg of acetaminophen per a day. Your narcotic medication may also contain acetaminophen so you need to be aware of your total dose from all the medications you are using.
- Ibuprofen (ie-Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve) may be started the same day as your surgery and may be used together with your narcotic pain medications and with acetaminophen. However, do not use ibuprofen or naproxen if you have had problems with stomach ulcers, kidney problems or if you have been told by a doctor not to use nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).
- Purchase an over the counter stool softener (Metamucil, Colace) while taking narcotic pain medication. This helps avoid constipation.
- Apply antibiotic ointment to incisions for 3 days after surgery then switch to Aquaphor or Vaseline.

DIET

- You may eat a regular diet.

ACTIVITY

- **IMPORTANT: To decrease the risk of blood clots after surgery, do not spend time in bed except for when you normally sleep. Except during your normal sleeping time, get up and walk around for at least 5 minutes every hour.**
- **SHOWER:** You may shower or bathe 1 day after surgery but cover your head so that the head wrap does not get wet. Ears should be kept completely dry for 7 days after your procedure. DO NOT swim, or use a whirlpool for 3 weeks or if there are any openings in the incision.
- **SLEEPING:** For the 3 days, sleep with your head & shoulders slightly elevated to help reduce swelling. Use at least 2 pillows for support. Avoid sleeping on your ear.
- **Avoid bending over for the first week after surgery**
- Do **NOT** push, pull, or lift anything heavier than 20 pounds (about the weight of a 2 gallons of milk) for 1 week.
- Do **NOT** do any strenuous activity or exercise (running, weight lifting, aerobics) for 2 weeks. After you start exercising, go slowly over 1 to 2 weeks until you are comfortable with the exercises.
- Do **NOT** engage in any sexual activity for at least 2 weeks; resume when completely comfortable.
- Do **NOT** drive or handle heavy machinery while taking narcotic pain medication or muscle relaxant medications.
- After the head wrap is removed, you may gently wash your ear in the shower, just let the water run over it. You may also gently clear the outside of the ear with a Q-tip.

INCISION MANAGEMENT

- Leave the head wrap on until your follow up appointment

HEAD WRAP AFTER 1 WEEK

- To maintain ear shape after the initial head wrap is removed, continue to wear a light head band for an additional 2 to 3 weeks. It is particularly important to wear it while sleeping to prevent the ear from being distorted.

WHAT ELSE TO EXPECT

- You can expect some minor bleeding from the incisions and some swelling. If you have a continuous bloody drip or if you are experiencing pain which is not relieved by pain medication, call Dr. Gutowski or Dr. Kerolus immediately.
- Some pain and discomfort for 3 to 4 weeks, although it should gradually get better from the first 2 to 3 days.
- If there are any sutures to remove, it will be done after 7 to 10 days.
- Expect some numbness at the surgical site, it will improve in a few days.

WHEN TO CALL DR. GUTOWSKI or DR. KEROLUS

- Fever over 101.5 for 2 readings taken 4 hours apart.
- Marked increase in redness, swelling, or pain around incision or drains.
- Any excessive bleeding or drainage from your incisions.
- Pain is not relieved by prescription medication.
- Persistent problems with nausea or vomiting
- CHEST PAIN or TROUBLE BREATHING: CALL 911 or go to an Emergency Room